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**IN THE CLAIMS**

Cancel claims 3 and 10.

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Add new claim 14 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A check comprising:

sheet material having a first area portion and a second area portion which is different from the first area portion;

means defining at least one pre-printed symbol which is other than a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the sheet material; and

means for storing on the second area portion of the sheet material encoded information including apriori reference image quality data which is representative of at least one image quality characteristic of associated with the at least one pre-printed symbol which is other than a MICR codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the sheet material to allow a determination to be made about the image quality of the pre-printed symbol which is other than a MICR codeline and which is pre-printed on the sheet material based upon the stored apriori reference image quality data.

2. (currently amended) A check comprising:

sheet material having a first area portion and a second area portion which is different from the first area portion;

at least one symbol which is other than a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the sheet material; and

means for storing on the second area portion of the sheet material encoded information including apriori reference image quality data which is representative of at least one image quality characteristic of associated with the at least one symbol which is other than a MICR codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the sheet material to-

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allow a determination to be made about the image quality of the symbol based upon the stored apriori reference image quality data.

3-10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A method of providing an indication of quality of an image of a financial document ~~either than currency~~ having a first area portion and a second area portion which is different from the first area portion, the method comprising:

storing on the second area portion of the financial document encoded information including apriori reference image quality data which is representative of an image quality characteristic of associated with at least one symbol which is other than a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the financial document;

receiving image data which is representative of the image of the financial document;

retrieving the stored apriori reference image quality data from the encoded information stored on the second area portion of the financial document;

comparing the retrieved apriori reference image quality data with the received image data ~~which is representative of the image of the financial document~~ to determine the image quality of the symbol which is other than a MICR codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the financial document; and

providing an indication of quality of the image of the financial document based upon the comparison of the retrieved apriori reference image quality data with the received image data.

12-13. (canceled)

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14. (new) A method of providing an indication of quality of an image of a check having a first area portion and a second area portion which is different from the first area portion, the method comprising:

storing on the second area portion of the check encoded information including apriori reference image quality data which is representative of an image quality characteristic associated with a symbol which is other than a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the check;

receiving image data which is representative of the image of the check;  
retrieving the apriori reference image quality data from the encoded information stored on the second area portion of the financial document;

comparing the retrieved apriori reference image quality data with the received image data to determine the image quality of the symbol which is other than a MICR codeline and which is pre-printed on the first area portion of the check; and

providing an indication of quality of the image of the check based upon the comparison of the retrieved apriori reference image quality data with the received image data.